

# CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computer program for use in a computer having an operating system, the computer program comprising code for:
  - determining a plurality of application programs that are to be launched by the operating system;
  - determining a program launch procedure associated with the application programs, the program launch procedure defining a sequence in which the application programs are to be launched by the operating system, the sequence based on the functionality of at least one of the application programs; and
  - launching the application programs with the operating system based on the program launch procedure.
2. The computer program of claim 1, wherein launching the application programs based on the program launch procedure comprises:
  - launching one of the application programs;
  - after a predetermined length of time, launching another of the application programs.

1 3. The computer program of claim 1, wherein launching the application programs  
 2 based on the program launch procedure comprises:  
 3 launching one of the application programs;  
 4 in response to a predetermined contingency, launching another of the  
 5 application programs.

1 4. The computer program of claim 1, wherein the program launch procedure is  
 2 specified by a user via a user interface device.

1 5. The computer program of claim 1, wherein determining a program launch  
 2 procedure associated with the application programs comprises accessing a data file  
 3 stored in a memory.

1 6. The computer program of claim 1, wherein the program launch procedure  
 2 further defines an operating system restriction for at least one of the application  
 3 programs.

1 7. The computer program of claim 1, wherein the launching the application  
 2 programs with the operating system is initiated by the operating system.

1 8. A method for controlling the manner in which application programs are  
 2 launched on a computer, the computer comprising a processor adapted to control the  
 3 operation of the computer and memory comprising an operating system that includes a  
 4 system initialization program adapted to store a list of programs to be launched by the  
 5 operating system, the method comprising the steps of:

6 storing a reference to a program launch management module in the system  
 7 initialization program, the program launch management module configured to:

8 determine application programs that are to be launched by the  
 9 operating system;

10 determine a program launch procedure associated with the application  
 11 programs, the program launch procedure defining a sequence in which the  
 12 application programs are to be launched, the sequence based on the  
 13 functionality of at least one of the application programs; and

14 launch the application programs based on the program launch  
 15 procedure; and

16 accessing the system initialization program and executing the program launch  
 17 management module.

1 9. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of installing the application  
 2 programs on the computer before the step of storing a reference to a program launch  
 3 management module in the system initialization program.

1 10. The method of claim 8, wherein launching the application programs based on  
 2 the program launch procedure comprises:  
 3 launching one of the application programs;  
 4 after a predetermined length of time, launching another of the application  
 5 programs.

1 11. The method of claim 8, wherein launching the application programs based on  
 2 the program launch procedure comprises:  
 3 launching one of the application programs;  
 4 in response to a predetermined contingency, launching another of the  
 5 application programs.

1 12. The method of claim 8, wherein the program launch procedure is specified by  
 2 a user via a user interface device.

1 13. The method of claim 8, wherein determining a program launch procedure  
 2 associated with the application programs comprises accessing a data file stored in a  
 3 memory.

1 14. The method of claim 8, wherein the program launch procedure further defines  
 2 an operating system restriction for at least one of the application programs.

1 15. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of initializing the operating  
 2 system after the step of storing a reference to a program launch management module  
 3 in the system initialization program.

1 16. The method of claim 8, wherein the operating system is Windows-based.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the system initialization program comprises  
2 a RunOnce key in a system registry associated with the operating system.

1 18. A method for controlling the launching of application programs by an  
2 operating system, the method comprising the steps of:

3 determining application programs that are to be launched by the operating  
4 system;

5 determining a program launch procedure associated with the application  
6 programs, the program launch procedure defining a sequence in which the application  
7 programs are to be launched by the operating system, the sequence based on the  
8 functionality of at least one of the application programs; and

9 launching the plurality of application programs based on the program launch  
10 procedure.

1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of launching the application  
2 programs based on the program launch procedure comprises the steps of:

3 launching one of the application programs;

4 after a predetermined length of time, launching another of the application  
5 programs.

1 20. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of launching the application  
 2 programs based on the program launch procedure further comprises the steps of:  
 3 launching one of the application programs;  
 4 in response to a predetermined contingency, launching another of the  
 5 application programs.

1 21. The method of claim 18, wherein the program launch procedure is specified by  
 2 a user via a user interface device.

1 22. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of determining a program launch  
 2 procedure associated with the application programs further comprises the step of  
 3 accessing a data file stored in a memory.

1 23. The method of claim 18, wherein the program launch procedure further  
 2 defines an operating system restriction for at least one of the application programs.

1 24. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of launching the application  
 2 programs with the operating system is initiated by the operating system.